

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 146037

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR, SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH INTEREST IN SOVIET AFFAIRS

1. SPANISH AMBASSADOR ROVIRA CALLED ON SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY MARSHALL SHULMAN JUNE 5 TO DISCUSS "EURO-COMMUNISM," SOVIET ACTIVITY IN AFRICA, AND U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

2. AMBASSADOR SHULMAN TOLD ROVIRA THAT THE "EUROCOMMUNIST" MOVEMENT HAS LOST STEAM OVER THE LAST YEAR, AND EARLIER WIDESPREAD APPREHENSION OVER THE PHENOMENON HAS DIMINISHED FOR THE TIME BEING. NOTING THAT HE WAS LEAST FAMILIAR

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WITH THE PCE, SHULMAN EXPLAINED TO ROVIRA THAT THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS ARE IN AN INTERESTING PHASE OF INTERNAL DISPUTE OVER TACTICS AND GENERAL STRATEGY. A NEW SITUATION EXISTS NOW THAT THE PCF HAS TURNED ITS BACK ON AN ALLIANCE WITH THE SOCIALISTS, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS ARE DETERIORATING. IN ITALY THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE PCI WILL BE ABLE TO

DISTANCE ITSELF FROM THE TAINT OF TERRORISM, AND DESPITE ITS ATTEMPTS TO DO SO, IT APPEARS THAT THE PCI IS LOSING SUPPORT.

3. IN RESPONSE TO ROVIRA'S QUESTION, SHULMAN DOUBTED THERE WAS ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND TERRORISM IN SPAIN AND ITALY THROUGH COMMUNIST PARTY CHANNELS. IN ITALY, FOR EXAMPLE, TERRORIST ACTIVITY IS DIRECTED IN PART AGAINST A POSSIBLE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. ROVIRA ASKED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF "EUROCOMMUNISM" ON SOVIET PARTY THINKING. SHULMAN REPLIED THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO EFFECTS: FIRST, THE MOVEMENT HAS PRODUCED SOME RESONANCE IN THE EASTERN EUROPEAN PARTIES; AND SECOND, THE SOVIETS FACE THE DILEMMA OF HOW TO REACT, AND WHAT ATTITUDE TO ADOPT TOWARD "EUROCOMMUNIST" PARTIES AND THE GOVERNMENTS WHICH THOSE PARTIES OPPOSE.

4. TURNING TO SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA, SHULMAN SAID THAT SOVIET ACTIVITY IS A RESPONSE TO OPPORTUNITIES EXTANT AT THIS STAGE OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT, RATHER THAN THE RESULT OF PRIOR DECISION. THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN CAUTIOUS IN COMMITTING THEMSELVES, WHILE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A GENUINE CUBAN SENSE OF MISSION. SHULMAN NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE THE NAIVE NOTION THAT BLAME FOR CUBAN ACTIVITY CANNOT BE PLACED ON THEIR DOORSTEP, AND HAVE GROSSLY UNDERESTIMATED THE IMPACT OF SOVIET POLICY ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

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TIONS. THOUGH THERE IS NO CONCERTED CAMPAIGN OF SOVIET AGGRESSIVENESS, HE CONCLUDED, THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF SOVIET ACTIONS IS SERIOUSLY DESTABILIZING.

5. RESPONDING TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, SHULMAN TOLD ROVIRA THAT WE ARE IN A DIFFICULT PERIOD AND SOVIET ACTIVITY IN AFRICA AND OTHER ISSUES ARE LIKELY TO KEEP TENSIONS ALIVE. THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH SALT, BUT SOVIET ACTIONS MAKE THIS VERY DIFFICULT. IN ADDITION, THE SOVIETS ARE REGRESSING ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. IN CONCLUSION SHULMAN NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE OPPOSED TO SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, AND WOULD PREFER TO SEE A DIVIDED WESTERN EUROPE. VANCE

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